

hands of the Government, but all the ministries have been transferred, and they're up and running.

I supported the decision. I thought it was a smart thing to do, primarily because the Prime Minister was ready for it. And it's a sign of confidence. It's a sign that we're ready to go, and it's a proud moment—it really is—for the Iraqi people. And frankly, I feel comfortable in making the decision, because I feel comfortable about Prime Minister Allawi and President al-Yawr. These are strong people. They're gutsy. They're courageous. They're, as we say in Texas, standup guys. You know, they'll lead. They'll lead their people to a better day. And it's going to be very hard for them and very trying, but they just—they and the Iraqi people need to hear, loud and clear, they'll have our friendship and our support, no matter how tough it gets.

Prime Minister Blair. I think it's worth just pointing out as well—I agree, obviously, with what's just been said, but I think you've got somewhere in the region of, is it 10 or 11 ministries that are already effectively run by the Iraqis themselves. I mean, their health and education ministries are already run by Iraqis. But it's a sign of their confidence and their desire to get on with it. They want to do it. They know that in the end, they've got to do it. They want that responsibility.

And I think one of the exciting things about the last few weeks is that the Iraqi

people, in a sense, through their Prime Minister and President, have indicated, "We want the responsibility." Now, we then stay and support, however, and we're not walking out of this at all. We stay and support them, and we'll stay for as long as it takes to make sure that that support is there for them, so that we help them to that freedom and democracy they want to see. And it's a—I think that, in a way, the relationship between us and the Iraqi Government has been—it's a healthier, better relationship now that there's this transfer of sovereignty there, and where they really want the responsibility of running their own country. But they know the practical fact is, for the moment, until their own security forces are built up properly, they need our support, and they have our support.

President Bush. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:55 p.m. at the Hilton Istanbul. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and President Ghazi al-Ujayl al-Yawr of the Iraqi interim government; L. Paul "Jerry" Bremer III, former Presidential Envoy to Iraq; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. Prime Minister Blair referred to President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia. A reporter referred to Minister of Defense Hazim Qutran al-Khuzai al-Shalan of Iraq.

Remarks at Galatasaray University in Istanbul *June 29, 2004*

Thank you all very much. Distinguished guests, the rector of this fine university, ladies and gentlemen: Laura and I are grateful for the warm and gracious hospitality we have received these past 3 days in the Republic of Turkey. I am honored

to visit this beautiful country where two continents meet, a nation that upholds great tradition and faces the future with confidence. America is honored to call Turkey an Ally and a friend.

Many Americans trace their heritage to Turkey, and Turks have contributed greatly to our national life, including, most recently, a lot of baskets for the Detroit Pistons from Mehmet Okur. I know you're proud of this son of your country, and there's a lot of people in Detroit really grateful for his talents.

I'm grateful to my friend the Prime Minister for his leadership and his hospitality. I also want to thank my friend the President, President Sezer, for his hospitality. These men and your country have hosted members of NATO in an historic time in our Alliance. For most of its history, NATO existed to deter aggression from a powerful army at the heart of Europe. In this century, NATO looks outward to new threats that gather in secret and bring sudden violence to peaceful cities. We face terrorist networks that rejoice when parents bury their murdered children or rejoice when bound men plead for mercy. We face outlaw regimes that give aid and shelter to these killers and seek weapons of mass murder. We face the challenges of corruption and poverty and disease, which throw whole nations into chaos and despair. These are the conditions in which terrorism can survive.

Some on both sides of the Atlantic have questioned whether the NATO Alliance still has a great purpose. To find that purpose, they only need to open their eyes. The dangers are in plain sight. The only question is whether we will confront them or look away and pay a terrible cost.

Over the last few years, NATO has made its decision. Our Alliance is restructuring to oppose threat that arise beyond the borders of Europe. NATO is providing security in Afghanistan. NATO has agreed to help train the security forces of a sovereign Iraq, which is a great advantage and crucial success for the Iraqi people. And in Istanbul, we have dedicated ourselves to the advance of reform in the broader Middle East, because all people deserve a just government and because terror is not the tool of the

free. Through decades of the cold war, our great Alliance of liberty never failed in its duties, and we are rising to our duties once again.

The Turkish people understand the terrorists, because you have seen their work, even in the last weeks. You've heard the sirens and witnessed the carnage and mourned the dead. After the murders of Muslims and Christians and Jews in Istanbul last November, a resident of this city said of the terrorists, "They don't have any religion. They are friends of evil." In one of the attacks, a Muslim woman lost her son Ahmet, her daughter-in-law Berta, and her unborn grandchild. This is what she said: "Today I am saying goodbye to my son. Tomorrow I'm saying farewell to my Berta. I don't know what the killers wanted from my kids. Were they jealous of their happiness?"

The Turkish people have grieved, but your nation is showing how terrorist violence will be overcome, with courage and with a firm resolve to defend your just and tolerant society. This land has always been important for its geography, here at the meeting place of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Now Turkey has assumed even greater historical importance because of your character as a nation. Turkey is a strong, secular democracy, a majority Muslim society, and a close ally of free nations. Your country, with 150 years of democratic and social reform, stands as a model to others and as Europe's bridge to the wider world. Your success is vital to a future of progress and peace in Europe and in the broader Middle East, and the Republic of Turkey can depend on the support and friendship of the United States of America.

For decades, my country has supported greater unity in Europe to secure liberty, to build prosperity, and to remove sources of conflict on this continent. Now the European Union is considering the admission of Turkey, and you are moving rapidly to meet the criteria for membership. Mustafa

Kemal Ataturk had a vision of Turkey as a strong nation among other European nations. That dream can be realized by this generation of Turks. America believes that as a European power, Turkey belongs in the European Union.

Your membership would also be a crucial advance in relations between the Muslim world and the West, because you are part of both. Including Turkey in the EU would prove that Europe is not the exclusive club of a single religion. It would expose the "clash of civilizations" as a passing myth of history. Fifteen years ago, an artificial line that divided Europe, drawn at Yalta, was erased. And now this continent has the opportunity to erase another artificial division by including Turkey in the future of Europe.

Turkey has found its place in the community of democracies by living out its own principles. Muslims are called to seek justice, fairness to all, care for the stranger, compassion for those in need. And you have learned that democracy is the surest way to build a society of justice. The best way to prevent corruption and abuse of power is to hold rulers accountable. The best way to ensure fairness to all is to establish the rule of law. The best way to honor human dignity is to protect human rights. Turkey has found what nations of every culture and every region have found: If justice is the goal, then democracy is the answer.

In some parts of the world, especially in the Middle East, there is a wariness toward democracy, often based on misunderstanding. Some people in Muslim cultures identify democracy with the worst of Western popular culture and want no part of it. And I assure them, when I speak about the blessings of liberty, coarse videos and crass commercialism are not what I have in mind. There is nothing incompatible between democratic values and high standards of decency. For the sake of their families and their culture, citizens of a free

society have every right to strive peacefully for a moral society.

Democratic values also do not require citizens to abandon their faith. No democracy can allow religious people to impose their own view of perfection on others, because this invites cruelty and arrogance that are foreign to every faith. And all people in a democracy have the right to their own religious beliefs. But all democracies are made stronger when religious people teach and demonstrate upright conduct, family commitment, respect for the law, and compassion for the weak. Democratic societies should welcome, not fear, the participation of the faithful.

In addition, democracy does not involve automatic agreement with other democracies. Free governments have a reputation for independence, which Turkey has certainly earned, and that is the way that democracy works. We deal honestly with each other. We make our own decisions, and yet, in the end, the disagreements of the moment are far outweighed by the ideals we share.

Because representative governments reflect their people, every democracy has its own structure, traditions, and opinions. There are, however, certain commitments of free governments that do not change from place to place. The promise of democracy is fulfilled in freedom of speech, the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, economic freedom, respect for women, and religious tolerance. These are the values that honor the dignity of every life and set free the creative energies that lead to progress.

Achieving these commitments of democracy can require decades of effort and reform. In my own country, it took generations to throw off slavery, racial segregation, and other practices that violated our ideals. So we do not expect that other societies can be transformed in a day. But however long the journey, there is only one destination worth striving for, and that is a society of self-rule and freedom.

Democracy leads to justice within a nation, and the advance of democracy leads to greater security among nations. The reason is clear: Free peoples do not live in endless stagnation and seethe in resentment and lash out in envy, rage, and violence. Free peoples do not cling to every grievance of the past. They build and live for the future. This is the experience of countries in the NATO Alliance. Bitterness and hostility once divided France and Germany, Germany and Poland, Romania and Hungary. But as these nations grew in liberty, ancient disputes and hatreds have been left to history. And because the people of Europe now live in hope, Europe no longer produces armed ideologies that threaten the peace of the world. Freedom in Europe has brought peace to Europe, and now freedom can bring peace to the broader Middle East.

I believe that freedom is the future of the Middle East, because I believe that freedom is the future of all humanity. And the historic achievement of democracy in the broader Middle East will be a victory shared by all. Millions who now live in oppression and want will finally have a chance to provide for their families and lead hopeful lives. Nations in the region will have greater stability because governments will have greater legitimacy. And nations like Turkey and America will be safer, because a hopeful Middle East will no longer produce ideologies and movements that seek to kill our citizens. This transformation is one of the great and difficult tasks of history. And by our own patience and hard effort and with confidence in the peoples of the Middle East, we will finish the work that history has given us.

Democracy, by definition, must be chosen and defended by the people themselves. The future of freedom in the Islamic world will be determined by the citizens of Islamic nations, not by outsiders. And for citizens of the broader Middle East, the alternatives could not be more clear. One alternative is a political doctrine of

tyranny, suicide, and murder that goes against the standards of justice found in Islam and every other great religion. The other alternative is a society of justice, where men and women live peacefully and build better lives for themselves and their children. This is the true cause of the people of the Middle East, and that cause can never be served by the murder of the innocent.

This struggle between political extremism and civilized values is unfolding in many places. We see the struggle in Iraq, where killers are attempting to undermine and intimidate a free government. We see the struggle in Iran, where tired, discredited autocrats are trying to hold back the democratic will of a rising generation. We see that struggle in Turkey, where the PKK has abandoned its cease-fire with the Turkish people and resumed violence. We see it in the Holy Land, where terrorist murderers are setting back the good cause of the Palestinian people, who deserve a reformed, peaceful, and democratic state of their own.

The terrorists are ruthless and resourceful. They will not prevail. Already more than half of the world's Muslims live under democratically constituted governments, from Indonesia to West Africa, from Europe to North America. And the ideal of democracy is also powerful and popular in the Middle East. Surveys in Arab nations reveal broad support for representative government and individual liberty. We are seeing reform in Kuwait and Qatar, Bahrain and Yemen, Jordan and Morocco. We're seeing men and women of conscience and courage step forward to advocate democracy and justice in the broader Middle East. As we found in the Soviet Union and behind the Iron Curtain, this kind of moral conviction was more powerful than vast armies and prison walls and the will of dictators. And this kind of moral conviction is also more powerful than the whips of the Taliban, the police state of Saddam Hussein, or the cruel designs of terrorists.

The way ahead is long and difficult, yet people of conscience go forward with hope. The rule of fear did not survive in Europe. The rule of free peoples will come to the Middle East.

Leaders throughout that region, including some friends of the United States, must recognize the direction of the events of the day. Any nation that compromises with violent extremists only emboldens them and invites future violence. Suppressing dissent only increases radicalism. The long-term stability of any government depends on being open to change and responsive to citizens. By learning these lessons, Turkey has become a great and stable democracy, and America shares your hope that other nations will take this path.

Western nations, including my own, want to be helpful in the democratic progress of the Middle East, yet we know there are suspicions rooted in centuries of conflict and colonialism. And in the last 60 years, many in the West have added to this distrust by excusing tyranny in the region, hoping to purchase stability at the price of liberty. But it did not serve the people of the Middle East to betray their hope of freedom. It has not made Western nations more secure to ignore the cycle of dictatorship and extremism. Instead we've seen the malice grow deeper and the violence spread, until both have appeared on the streets of our own cities. Some types of hatred will never be appeased. They must be opposed and discredited and defeated by a hopeful alternative, and that alternative is freedom.

Reformers in the broader Middle East are working to build freer and more prosperous societies, and America and Turkey, the G-8, the EU, and NATO have now agreed to support them. Many nations are helping the people of Afghanistan to secure a free government. And NATO now leads a military operation in Afghanistan, in the first action by the Alliance outside of Europe. In Iraq, a broad coalition, including the military forces of many NATO coun-

tries, is helping the people of that country to build a decent and democratic government after decades of corrupt oppression. And NATO is providing support to a Polish-led division.

The Government of Iraq has now taken a crucial step forward. In a nation that suffered for decades under tyranny, we have witnessed the transfer of sovereignty and the beginning of self-government. In just 15 months, the Iraqi people have left behind one of the worst regimes in the Middle East, and their country is becoming the world's newest democracy. The world has seen a great event in the history of Iraq, in the history of the Middle East, and in the history of liberty.

The rise of Iraqi democracy is bringing hope to reformers across the Middle East and sending a very different message to Tehran and Damascus. A free and sovereign Iraq is a decisive defeat for extremists and terrorists, because their hateful ideology will lose its appeal in a free and tolerant and successful country. The terrorists are doing everything they can to undermine Iraqi democracy, by attacking all who stand for order and justice and by committing terrible crimes to break the will of free nations. These terrorists have the ability to cause suffering and grief, but they do not have the power to alter the outcome in Iraq. The civilized world will keep its resolve. The leaders of Iraq are strong and determined, and the people of Iraq will live in freedom.

Iraq still faces hard challenges in the days and months ahead. Iraq's leaders are eager to assume responsibility for their own security, and that is our wish as well. So this week at our summit, NATO agreed to provide assistance in training Iraqi security forces. I am grateful to Turkey and other NATO Allies for helping our friends in Iraq to build a nation that governs itself and defends itself.

Our efforts to promote reform and democracy in the Middle East are moving

forward. At the NATO summit, we approved the Istanbul Cooperative Initiative, offering to work together with nations of the broader Middle East to fight terrorism, to control their borders, and to aid victims of disaster. We're thankful for the important role that Turkey is playing as a democratic partner in the Broader Middle East Initiative.

For all of our efforts to succeed, however, more is needed than plans and policies. We must strengthen the ties of trust and good will between ourselves and the peoples of the Middle East. And trust and good will come more easily when men and women clear their minds and their hearts of suspicion and prejudice and unreasoned fear. When some in my country speak in an ill-informed and insulting manner about the Muslim faith, their words are heard abroad and do great harm to our cause in the Middle East. When some in the Muslim world incite hatred and murder with conspiracy theories and propaganda, their words are also heard by a generation of young Muslims who need truth and hope, not lies and anger. All such talk, in America or in the Middle East, is dangerous and reckless and unworthy of any religious tradition. Whatever our culture differences may be, there should be respect and peace in the House of Abraham.

The Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk has said that the finest view of Istanbul is not from the shores of Europe or from the shores of Asia but from a bridge that unites them and lets you see both. His work has been a bridge between cultures, and so is the Republic of Turkey. The people of this land understand, as that great writer has observed, that "What is important is not a clash of parties, civilizations, cultures, East and West." What is important, he says, is to realize "that other people in other continents and civilizations" are "exactly like you."

Ladies and gentlemen, in their need for hope, in their desire for peace, in their right to freedom, the peoples of the Middle East are exactly like you and like me. Their birthright of freedom has denied—been denied for too long. We will do all in our power to help them find the blessings of liberty.

Thank you for your hospitality. May God bless Turkey. May God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:13 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Ahmet Necdet Sezer of Turkey; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.